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ABSTRACT

To determine the normal sequence of the development of Spanish phonology and Spanish grammatical patterns in the speech of native Spanish speakers, ages 2-5, a study of the acquisition of interrogative formation was undertaken. Two male and two females from each of nine age intervals between two and five were selected as informants; all were middle-class natives of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The subjects were interviewed 3 times each, for a total of two hours, by the author or by a female native speaker. The report of the findings, which includes a brief review of basic interrogative structures, shows that two-year-olds can distinguish between yes/no and information questions, while production lags behind comprehension. Those at 2.6 years display greater complexity in internal structure, while those at 2.9 years use "con quien," "de quien" and "cual." The next significant changes appear at 3.3 years, with V+Inf. in information questions and full tag questions. The order of acquisition is: (1) yes/no questions, (2) information WH-questions, (3) Tag questions with "verdad." The major portion of development is completed by 3.3 years. Questions requiring further investigation are proposed. (CLK)

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The Acquisition of Questions In Texas Spanish: Age 2 - Age 5

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study to be presented in the following pages was undertaken for the purpose of determining the normal sequence of development of Spanish phonology and Spanish grammatical patterns in the speech of native Spanish-speaking children between the ages of two and five. Ultimately, we hope to determine which syntactic structures are characteristic of each age level and what the range of language variability is for each chronological age level.

Our present report will focus exclusively on interrogatives and their development through each age level. The development of grammatical constructions has been described in another document (González, 1970). Other aspects of the acquisition of Spanish will be examined in later documents as time allows.

In studying a complex developmental process such as language acquisition, the ideal procedure would be to follow several informants from the time they utter their first sound until they reach full linguistic maturity. Once all this information had been recorded on tape, the investigator would transcribe the material, and finally proceed to analyze it. The amount of time required for a complete study would be exhorbitant and wholly impractical.

Since such a procedure is clearly infeasible, we chose instead to deal with the problem on an "apparent time" basis, rather than in terms of real time. Instead of following the development of several informants from age two through five, we used different informants from selected age levels between two and five years of age. This

procedure provides some indication of the range of grammatical structures present at the different age intervals and shows changes in structure from one age level to the next higher one.

Due to limitations of time and money, only two males and two females were interviewed from each of the following age intervals (given in years and months): 2.0, 2.6, 2.9, 3.0, 3.3, 3.6, 4.0, 4.6, 5.0, 5.6, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, and 10.0. Our decision to use more than one child at each age level was based on our desire to obtain a representative sample of child language at that level. Using the speech of one child as representative of any age level could be very misleading. The results presented here are based on the analysis of three of the four informants interviewed at each age level; only the age levels between two and five will be examined here.

It was our intention, in setting up the design for this project, to secure a language sample which was representative of the area of investigation and which would provide a picture of normal language development. Children from lower socio-economic families were excluded because of the adverse effect their socio-economic status might have on their language development. Upper-class native Spanish-speaking children, on the other hand, were not selected because they form such a small minority in our area of investigation that it would have been very difficult to obtain informants at all of the desired age levels. We are aware that, since the majority of the population in our area of investigation is below poverty level, our middle-class sample is not

truly representative of the area. However, since our focus was on language development, we wanted to observe it under conditions which are maximally favorable to normal growth.

For purposes of this study, middle-class status was defined solely on an annual income basis. Our informants were children whose parents earned between $4500 and $20,000 a year. The great majority of the families had incomes closer to the former figure. In our area of investigation they were considered middle-class, although by nationwide standards they might be classified in the lower socio-economic class. The area of investigation was the Lower Río Grande Valley of Texas, specifically the communities of Brownsville, San Benito, and Harlingen, Texas, all within twenty-five miles of each other. This area was chosen because it has long had a stable middle-class Mexican American group which has shown greater language maintenance than is true elsewhere in the state.

Aside from requiring that our informants be middle-class, we also required that they speak Spanish (as opposed to only understanding it). Prospective informants were asked several questions in Spanish, such as ¿Cómo te llamas? ¿Dónde vives? ¿Cuántos años tienes? (What's your name, Where do you live, and How old are you, respectively). If the child proved unable to answer the questions in Spanish, he was dismissed and another informant of the same age was found. Several prospects were rejected because of their inability to give responses in Spanish. Unfortunately, our screening process was much less effective when we

used it with the very young, such as the two and two-and-a-half-year-olds.

Each informant was interviewed for a total of approximately two hours. Since the child's attention span is considerably less than the total time, it was necessary to divide the total into convenient 30 or 40-minute intervals. Materials of different types were used in the elicitation, including dolls, toy cars, storybooks, and coloring books. The latter seemed to be especially effective with the four-to-six age group.

The elicitation technique used in the study is basically conversational. The interviewer attempted to elicit certain structures from the child by bringing them into the conversation in such a way as to nudge the child into using the structure in question. It is, to be sure, impossible to succeed in this endeavor all the time, but we found it to be quite successful. At times, our attempts at obtaining a certain structure resulted in the creation of an overly artificial situation. Needless to say, this caused the child some anxious moments.

The first interview with the child did not attempt to elicit any specific structures. It consisted mostly of general questions about the family, the home, and about everyday activities. Interview II concentrated on verb tenses and moods (i.e., present perfect indicative, present subjunctive). The final interview included a morphology test which utilizes Spanish nonsense words, much like that carried out in English by Jean Berko in 1958[1]. Also included in the final interview

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[1]Berko, Jean."The Child's Learning of English Morphology," in Psycholinguistics: A Book of Readings, ed. Sol Saporta (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1961), 359-375.

was an experimental test in Spanish phonology under development at that time by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, in which the child is asked to repeat certain sentences which contain all the phonemes and significant allophones of Spanish. It was not possible to administer these tests to all the children; those in the 2.0 - 3.6 age range did not prove tractable in this aspect of the interview.

A half-track, 110-volt AC Tandberg Model 11 portable tape recorder was used in the recording of all informants. All recording was done on 1.5 Mylar recording tape at a speed of three and three-fourths inches per second. An omni-directional microphone was used in the recording. Site of the individual interviews varied, as did the recording conditions. The older children were interviewed in kindergartens and elementary schools. The younger ones were interviewed in the home, usually with the mother or other members of the family present. These latter interviews were often conducted under less than favorable recording conditions, as noises such as babies crying in the background frequently intruded. About half of the interviews were done by the writer personally; the rest were done by a female native speaker of the area who had worked with children and was familiar with the interview technique.

The interviews were transcribed by two native Spanish speakers. The transcriptions were reviewed by the writer before a grammatical analysis was begun.

In an apparent-time study such as the one we have undertaken, it

must be borne in mind that we are not studying the language of the same child from age two to age five. We are studying the speech of different Mexican American children at different chronological ages and varying stages of language development. From this we can discover the grammatical patterns that are representative of each age level and, hopefully, show the normal pattern of growth in children's language as it develops from simple utterances to grammatically complex sentences.

Before continuing, there is another point that requires clarification. Our study concerns itself directly with language performance and only indirectly with language competence. Performance involves actual utterances created by the subject; competence involves the potential performance of an idealized speaker-hearer of the language: his intrinsic knowledge of the language.[2] It follows that performance reflects competence, although imperfectly. It also follows that we gain insight into language competence through performance.

Our reason for concentrating on performance is simple: we are dealing with language at its earliest stages and would like to have as much confidence as possible in our conclusions regarding the grammatical structures that the children possessed. If their performance indicated ability to manipulate a certain structure, we could be certain of its presence in the children's internalized competence model. Another reason for focusing on performance was the relative ease of interpretation. A good number of responses, especially among the 2.0 and 2.6 age groups,

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[2] Chomsky, Noam. Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 3-4.

would have been difficult to interpret within the framework of competence.

The findings have been organized by age group. Emergence of question types is noted, examples are provided, and possible explanations are posited for deviations encountered in the data. Linguistic processes are explained as necessary in the course of the discussion of interrogative types. Examples are given in the form in which the children uttered them.

II. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

We would like to begin by reviewing some basic interrogative structures in Spanish. The treatment provided here is meant merely as background and not meant to be exhaustive; it will nevertheless suffice for our purposes.

Spanish interrogative structures, though superficially manifested in a variety of ways, are essentially of two types: Yes/No questions and Information (or WH-) questions. The former type has as its deep structure a declarative statement; this statement is converted into a yes/no question by changing the intonation juncture at the end of the utterance to rising. Thus from a statement like

Tú fuiste al juego (You went to the game).

we can derive the yes/no question

¿Tú fuiste al juego? (Did you go to the game?)

Also considered part of the yes/no question group are what are known as "tag" questions. These differ from yes/no questions in that they seek a specific response; that is, the hearer is expected to agree or disagree with the speaker, depending on the tag used in the

question. They indicate to the hearer the type of response that is expected.

Spanish makes use of ¿no? and ¿verdad? (among others) to convert declarative sentences into questions requesting a sí (yes) response. These tags are placed at the end of the sentence, and are accompanied by rising juncture. Examples:

From: Tú eres Chicano. (You're a Chicano.) → Tú eres Chicano, ¿no? (You're a Chicano, aren't you?)

El papa es católico. (The pope is catholic.) → El papa es católico, ¿verdad? (The pope is catholic, isn't he

Tag questions in which a negative response is expected are formulated by using ¿verdad? along with a negative element in the declarative base sentence: Tú no eres Chicano, ¿verdad? (You're not a Chicano, are you?). ¿Verdad? can also be positioned at the beginning of the sentence, but if so positioned, the relator que must be introduced between verdad and the rest of the utterance: ¿Verdad que tú no eres Chicano? (Isn't it so that you're not a Chicano?). In order of transformational complexity, the Yes/No question is the simplest, followed by the post-sentence tag, and lastly, the pre-sentence tag involving verdad que.

Information questions, the second major type, are those that require specific facts as responses. The nature of the information requested is indicated by the choice of interrogative word in the formulation of the question. Thus, responses to dónde (where) questions would normally be locative adverbs or phrases: ¿Dónde vive Luis? (Where does Luis live?) would normally yield responses of the type En California, En la calle Seis, and so on. Cuándo (when) information questions would

normally elicit temporal adverbs or adverb phrases: ¿Cuándo llegó tu hermano? (When did your brother arrive?) would elicit Ayer, Esta tarde a las dos, and other temporal phrases.

In addition to differences in the type of information sought by the two question types, there is a difference in intonation juncture. Unlike yes/no questions, information questions do not have a rising intonation juncture.

The first chronological level examined in our study, age 2.0 years, already provided evidence of emerging interrogative structures. All informants appeared to understand yes/no questions and responded to them appropriately:

INTERVIEWER: ¿Tienes calor? (Are you hot?)

CHILD: No.

INTERVIEWER: ¿Le tienes miedo? (Are you afraid of it?)

CHILD: No.

INTERVIEWER: ¿Quieres jugar con Debbie? (Do you want to play with Debbie?)

CHILD: Sí. (Yes).

It is worth noting that at no time did any of the informants respond to a yes/no question with anything other than the Spanish equivalents of yes or no. This indicates that the child can already distinguish between the two basic interrogative types. To what extent the child was relying on intonation alone to distinguish the two types (and thus respond minimally but appropriately to them) is not clear. There are some clear indications that the children's comprehension went

beyond that required to respond to yes/no questions. All children at this level, for example, responded with locative adverbs to dónde (where) questions:

INTERVIEWER: ¿Pa dónde? (Where to?)

CHILD: Allá.

INTERVIEWER: ¿Dónde 'ta Lee?. (Where's Lee?)

CHILD: 'Qui 'ta. (Here he is.)

Although this was the only information-type question that was common in the sample of all children, appropriate answers were also evident in responses to other information questions, among them qué (what), cómo (how) [with llamarse, to be called], cuántos (how many). Only one information question, utilizing de quién (whose) as the question word, received an unacceptable response: ahi (there). Apparently the interpretation assigned to it by the child was that of a locative dónde question.

As expected, production of interrogative structures lagged significantly behind comprehension. The principal process for producing questions at this stage was through the addition of rising juncture to words other than question words. Among the examples: ¿Ves? (You see?) ¿Ahi? (There?), ¿Oto? (Another one?), ¿Aquí? (Here?), and ¿Eta? (This one?). As can be seen in the examples, different grammatical categories were used in this process: verbs, locative adverbs, nominalized adjectives, and so on.

The evidence indicates that our sample of children could not only

comprehend yes/no questions; they were able to apply the principle involved in their production to construct yes/no questions of their own. This was dramatically illustrated when one child made a yes/no question from a nonsense word: ¿Amala?

Although the preceding method of question formation was the most common, there were other types in evidence. The three children produced full-sentence information questions with qué and dónde:

¿On ta (dónde está) tu pig? (Where's your pig?)

¿Qué es? (What is it?)

In the case of dónde, the example provided was the only one encountered. Qué and dónde also appeared as one-word questions with rising juncture; they were the only question words to so appear.

There were some difficulties with the production of full-sentence information questions, specifically with respect to por qué (why) and quién (who). In the former case, the question word qué (what) was used in place of por qué, possibly because of the greater frequency of qué in the questions the child hears at home. Another possibility is that the child interprets and produces qué for por qué because of the greater stress on the second portion of por qué. A third possibility could be that the child is using a construction he has already mastered to express a more complex concept, the formulation of which has not yet been perfected.

The difficulty with the quién question lay with using it with a non-human referent, rather than with a human referent as required by the language. These are the finer points of the grammar that the

child has yet to master.

At the end of level one, then, we can safely state that the child understands yes/no questions and uses the intonation process to produce one-word questions of his own. Qué and dónde are used in both isolated form and in full-sentence question form; verbs used in these full-sentence questions are restricted to ser and estar (both "to be") respectively. Question word order never appeared to be a problem; our data, however, are too limited at this time to draw any conclusions on this point.

Interrogative structures at age 2.6 displayed a greater variety and complexity than those of the previous age level. This increase in complexity of internal structure in questions reflects the general increased complexity of the child's utterances at this level.

Of the three informants whose speech was analyzed, one of them, though chronologically at the level of the other two, was grammatically deficient. This was manifested in his performance in all aspects of the interview. His performance was closer to that of our two-year-old informants. The remarks that follow concern the performance of our other two informants, whom we believe to be more representative of this age level.

Full-sentence yes/no questions and negative yes/no questions appeared here for the first time:

Full sentence yes/no question: ¿Aíta (ahorita) vamos a los swings?
(Can we go to the swings in a whil

Negative yes/no question: ¿No tay (trae) pescao ahi?
(Doesn't he have a fish there?)

These are few in quantity and are outnumbered by full-sentence information questions.

Quién (who) questions appear to pose no problem now, unlike previously.. Our two normal informants seem to understand and produce questions with it:

¿Quién lo rompió? (Who tore it?)

¿Quién está hablando? (Who's talking?)

Qué and dónde questions increase in frequency, both in full-sentence form and one-word questions; the full-sentence questions make use of a great variety of verbs and verb tenses. One-word questions fashioned from non-interrogative words plus rising juncture have all but disappeared.

Also making their initial appearance were full-sentence questions with por qué and its negative counterpart:

¿Por qué me la dejates? (Why did you leave it for me?)

¿Por qué no vamos a la casa? (Why don't we go home?)

Along with her appropriate productions of por qué questions, one child produced deviations in which qué was substituted for por qué: ¿Qué se le salió el zapato? (Why did her shoe come off?). Interestingly enough, it was this same child who produced the greatest number and variety of sentences.

Questions with cuándo (when) were noted for the first time here; one occurrence was observed: ¿Cuándo me dejas el colol (color)? (When are you going to leave me the crayon?). Both children did, however, exhibit comprehension of the structure. The emergence of this pattern,

when examined in conjunction with the development of other areas of the grammar (such as temporal adverbs and verb tenses), suggests that the children have become aware of time-related concepts at this stage of language development. Formulation of these concepts was not considered characteristic of this age level, as their infrequent appearance leads us to believe that it is an emerging category.

As with the previous level, the utilization of cómo (how) in full-sentence questions was limited to the verb llamarse (to be called): ¿Cómo se llama? (What is it called?). There was no evidence that the child had mastered the more common meaning (in adult language) of cómo, as in ¿Cómo trabaja esta cosa? (How does this thing work?). Rather, the use exhibited by the children was restrictive and could be looked on as a variation of a question utilizing qué: ¿Qué es eso? (What's that?). The child was using cómo in a structure that requests a label, a name; he was not requesting an explanation, a reason, or a description of a process. Cognitively, the child did not yet appear ready to manipulate the concept of cómo: his restrictive use of this question word with llamarse is evidence of this.

An interesting variation appeared in three questions generated by one informant. Rather than begin the question with an interrogative word, the child began with the subject, followed by the question word, and finally ending with a verb:

INSTEAD OF	SHE PRODUCED
¿Qué ta haciendo la muchachita? (What's the little girl doing?)	¿La muchachita qué ta haciendo?
¿Qué le está hablando Santa Clos? (What is Santa Claus telling her?)	¿Santa Clos qué le está hablando?
¿Dónde está la niña? (Where's the little girl?)	¿La niña ónde está?

Most questions were constructed in the expected manner, with these exceptions. There were no observed pause between the initial subjects (la muchachita, Santa Clos, la niña) and the rest of the utterance; the entire utterance was produced as a single unit.

This particular child, having mastered the basic formulations of full-sentence questions with qué and dónde, appears to be experimenting (and successfully!) with a new word order in questions. Children at subsequent age levels sporadically exhibited evidence of this ability. No examples of unacceptable word order in questions were encountered for this age level.

At age level 2.9 (two years, nine months), questions with con quién (with whom), de quién (whose), and cuál (which one) are produced for the first time. Examples include:

¿Con quién vamos? (Who do we go with?)

¿Ese de quién es? (Whose is that one?)

¿Cuál e más bonito? (Which one is prettier?)

The majority of full-sentence information questions involve qué, dónde, quién, and por qué; these were also the favorites at our previous age level. Questions with cuándo, also noted in the previous level, were

encountered in the speech of one child. Several of these full-sentence questions included temporal adverbs, as did a few yes/no full-sentence questions: ¿Ya te vas, mami? (Are you leaving already, mommy?).

Deviations were noted in the use of the appropriate question word in formulating full-sentence information questions. One informant used qué for quién: *¿Qué sabe? (for ¿Quién sabe? Who knows?). This same child did not produce any interrogative sentences with quién. In fact, in a couple of instances, she used qué for cómo with llamarse:

*¿Qué (for cómo) te llamas? (What's your name?)

The child appeared to be using qué as a general question word, a question word to be used in formulating all information questions. The semantic domains encompassed by qué information questions are being extended to include other interrogative areas, in this case quién and cómo. Since cómo was used exclusively with llamarse, it is possible that some reinforcement was provided between the function of cómo in this instance and qué in general.

The lone remaining child exhibited use of the more general use of cómo, namely, how: ¿Cómo se abre, welita (abuelita)? (How does one open this, grandma?). She appeared to have gone beyond the initial (and probably more frequent) use of cómo with llamarse. Of our three informants, this child produced the greatest number and variety of questions.

Age 3.0 produced no significant changes in interrogative structures. The primary difference between this level and the previous one appears

to be the increasing grammatical complexity and length of some of the yes/no questions uttered by the children:

¿A ti no te busta (gusta) comer hielo?
(Don't you like to eat ice?)

¿Te puedes bañarte a bich (beach) tú?
(Can you bathe in the beach?)

Especially worthy of note is the construction Verb + Infinitive, absent in any previous level and generally considered to result from a transformation that combines two simple sentences into one.

Several important changes were revealed at the 3.3 level. The Verb + Infinitive construction, previously limited to yes/no questions, now appears in information questions: ¿Y por qué lo quiere decir a la puerta? (And why does he want to say it to the door?). This raises the possibility that new grammatical constructions are first introduced into questions through the relatively primitive yes/no question; from there it spreads into other interrogative and sentence forms. Our data are too meager to go beyond just suggesting the possibility.

Adjective relative clauses were found in information questions at this stage:

¿Qué es esto que está adentro? (What's this that's inside?)

¿Qué es ésa que está allá en la lámpara? (What's that on the lamp?)

Yes/no questions incorporate noun clauses in addition to the Verb + Infinitive structure:

¿Sabes pa qué es esto? (Do you know what this is for?)

¿Sabes por qué no trae zapatos?
(Do you know why he doesn't have any shoes on?)

¿Sabes acuál es el tío? (Do you know which one is the uncle?)

Apparently the complexity of linguistic structures within the interrogative framework has no effect on the syntactic positioning of the question word in full-sentence questions. In the course of this discussion, we have witnessed the growth of questions from one-word utterances to complex sentences produced by transformations. We have never encountered any deviations with respect to the position of the question word in the sentence.

Full-sentence tag questions made their initial appearance at this time; both pre-sentence and post-sentence positions were in evidence for the tag element:

> Cuando acabe me subo, ¿vedá (verdad)?
> (When I get through I can get on, right?)
>
> De este color se pinta, ¿vedá?
> (This is the color it goes, isn't it?)
>
> ¿Verdá que es un carro?
> (Isn't it so that it's a car?)
>
> ¿Verdá que no vas a estar aquí en la casa?
> (Isn't it so that you're not going to be home?)

It should be noted that the children that used these variations used them appropriately; that is, the relator que was supplied only when verdad appeared in initial position. This indicates that the children were aware of the difference in formulation between varieties of the "verdad" tag questions in the language.

Why is the tag question so late in surfacing? Several possibilities exist. Our sampling at earlier stages may not have been extensive enough to capture instances of its relatively rare occurrence. Or it may very well be that the tag question demands a higher level of cognitive

functioning than was available to our younger informants; its absence from our earlier sample would reflect this. The emergence of tag questions at about the same time as complicated linguistic structures lends credence to the second hypothesis.

Equally attractive is the theory that the children up to now had been using the yes/no question formation to express what is conveyed by a tag question; that they did not have the linguistic relationships necessary for such expression or did not yet understand the not-too-obvious distinction in meaning between yes/no questions and their tag counterparts.

Lois Bloom, in her detailed analysis of the acquisition of negation in English, observed that her subjects initially expressed negation of complex concepts by using simple structures whose earlier use had been limited to simpler negation.[3] The same general type of process seems to be occurring in Spanish: the simpler form, the yes/no question, was used initially to "fill in" for the tag question constructions. Later, when the child's linguistic ability matched the complexity of the concept to be expressed, the verdad tag question emerged.

Age levels 3.6, 4.0, 4.6, and 5.0 produced no new interrogative structures, suggesting that by the age of three years, three months the Chicano child has acquired all the basic interrogative structures. Grammatically complex structures continue to be incorporated in an ever-expanding variety of interrogatives, as illustrated in the following examples from 3.6, 4.0, and 4.6:

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[3]Bloom, Lois. Language Development: Form and Function of Emerging Grammars. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970, pp. 218-219.

¿On (dónde) ta (está) la muchachita que se cayó?
(Where is the little girl that fell?)

¿Qué es esto que está vieno (viendo)?
(What's this that she's looking at?)

¿Por qué no le pone otra cosa que tiene aquí?
(Why doesn't he put on something else that he has here?)

¿Cómo dijites el otro día que te dije que iba mi hermano a'lá?
(How did you say the other day when I told you that my brother was going by over there?)

¿Me vas a regalar el que yo quiera?
(Are you going to give me whichever one I want?)

¿No ves un animal que pasó por allí?
(Don't you see an animal that passed through there?)

III. CONCLUSIONS.

The order of acquisition of questions in Spanish appears to be the following:

1. Yes/no questions
2. Information (WH-) questions
3. Tag questions with verdad.

As the child's linguistic abilities become more sophisticated, he begins to introduce more complex elements into the question structure (such as the Verb + Infinitive structure, relative adjective clauses, noun clauses). This did not appear to cause any difficulty for the child in creating questions. He seemed very adept at weaving the most complex of structures into his interrogative sentences.

The child's interrogative formations peak at age three years three months. By this age he is using all the question types he is likely to use in his lifetime. Internally, the questions will become more complex, but the basic types will remain the same. We feel that this is

due at least in part to the relatively easy manner of creating questions in Spanish. The grammatical structures used in questions at a given level paralleled those used in other aspects of the interview by the child.

IV. THE ACQUISITION OF SPANISH INTERROGATIVES VS. ENGLISH INTERROGATIVE

We turn now to a comparison of our findings with those of similar studies of English question acquisition, specifically the study conducted by Brown, Cazden, and Bellugi in 1969.[4] The study traced the development of questions and other structures in the speech of three children, two of whom were 27 months old and one 18 months old at the beginning of the study.

The findings were arranged by stages. At Stage I, the investigators reported the production of yes/no questions; information questions are not understood by the children at this stage. Our findings for the comparable chronological age agree in part with the English study. The principal difference lies in that our informants at age 2.0 did seem to understand information questions; they responded appropriately to a wide variety of such interrogatives.

Meaningful comparisons with the English findings at Stage II are difficult to make. The English children, by now 32 and 22 months old, have not yet begun to use auxiliary verbs, a crucial part of interrogative constructions in English. They can answer who and what questions correctly and are able to produce but not answer appropriately, questions with why and why not. The children in our study at a comparable chronological level (2.6) seemed more advanced than their English counterparts,

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Brown, R., Cazden, C., & Bellugi, U. "The Child's Grammar From I to III." In J.P. Hill (Ed.), Minnesota Symposium on Child Psychology, Vol. 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969. Pp. 28-73.

producing a wide array of interrogatives including why and why not.

Since Spanish does not require auxiliary verbs in its formulation of information questions, the superior performance of the Chicano children must be attributed at least in part to this. While the children in the English study were struggling with auxiliaries, the children in our study appeared to devote their time to producing a greater variety of structures. The simpler formulation of Spanish interrogatives was clearly an advantage.

By Stage III, Brown, Cazden, and Bellugi report that the child's auxiliary verb system has developed (chronological age: 38 and 24 months, respectively). Relative clauses and conjunction have appeared, and auxiliaries are properly placed in yes/no questions (as are negatives in negative yes/no questions). In information questions, the auxiliary verb, when present, is not usually inverted with the subject as is required by English.

Spanish speakers at a comparable level (3.3) exhibited use of relative clauses and conjunction. Inversion of the subject (when overtly expressed) and the verb was never a problem. The use of auxiliaries in questions is specific to English; therefore, their development cannot be compared with anything similar in Spanish.

V. QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

Our initial venture into the area of Spanish language acquisition has yielded some general trends and some tantalizing insights. Equally important, it has made us painfully aware of how little we know about the acquisition of Spanish.

It is our hope that this study will be followed by real-time case studies (as opposed to apparent-time studies such as ours). Comparison of the results obtained through the different approaches should prove rewarding. The time span between age 2.0 and 2.6 deserves special scrutiny; there was tremendous growth observed during this time. Unfortunately, we were only able to capture the end result and not the intervening stages.

Subsequent studies should investigate the order of acquisition of specific information questions. We noted that cuándo and cómo questions appear relatively late, but this deserves further investigation.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, in-depth studies should be carried out comparing the acquisition of Spanish by Chicano children with acquisition of Spanish by children in other Spanish-speaking countries (Mexico, for example). Such comparison should serve to dispel the notion that Chicano children speak an unintelligible, ungrammatical, underdeveloped language. Such investigations should serve to remind us once again of the truly impressive linguistic accomplishment of the Chicano children of the Southwest.

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